

THE

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# SHEKEL



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The Journal of Israel and Jewish History and Numismatics  
Volume 53 No. 4 October November December 2020

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## COMMEMORATING THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS PEACE AGREEMENT



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*Featuring:* • *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: Life and Legacy*

• *Amulet Demonstrates Catholic-Jewish Connection by Simcha Kuritzky*

• *Mossad Medals Commemorate Monumental Humanitarian Mission by Eve Glover*

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# ***THE SHEKEL***

*THE JOURNAL OF ISRAEL AND JEWISH HISTORY AND NUMISMATICS*

VOLUME 53 NO. 4 (NO.282)

OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER 2020

CHAYA SARA OPPENHEIM, EDITOR

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JUDAEA CAPTA: SUBJUGATION AND  
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# MESSAGE FROM THE NEW AINA PRESIDENT

The baton has just been passed to a new generation. I believe I am the first AINA president who is not a charter member, and none of the current officers are either.

I started kindergarten in 1967, when AINA was founded, and didn't start collecting coins until 1971. At that time, I lived in rural California where Israel coins were not to be found. Relatives gave me some and I bought older pieces by mail, but only the trade coins. This was near the peak of the Israel market, and commemoratives were beyond my meager budget. It wasn't until after I graduated with a Bachelors' and got a job with an accounting firm that I bought my first Israel silver commemorative. This was in 1982, after the bubble burst and Israel coin prices came crashing down. Over the next few years, I completed my base metal and silver commemorative coin set, even acquiring coins that seemed cheap while a poor graduate student. Collecting fatigue set in a little over a decade ago, and I thought the prices would be better on the secondary market, so I bought some of the silver shekel coins but not the 2 shekalim, and there are still a couple holes in my silver type set. I've slowly built up my gold commemorative collection as well.

I think it is time to breathe new life into the Israel coin hobby. I hope to update and reissue our catalog of Israel Money and Medals in digital form. I find the on-line databases difficult to work with, and the Krause catalog has too many errors. Plus, I

really like dividing up the commemorative coins by series, as you will see in my article on that subject. We're just in the planning stage right now. I'm aiming for the catalog to come out at Israel's 75th anniversary, much like the first catalog by Bertram & Weber came out for Israel's 20th. After that, we can work on cataloging Israel's medals, then updating the Judaic Tokens and Medals book. While I don't know what the commercial arrangements will be for publishing, it is my hope that the catalogs will be very inexpensive, almost a loss-leader to help introduce more collectors to Israel and Jewish numismatics. We will use a standard page size so the catalog can be printed by those who want a physical book.

Some of you may remember I was AINA Treasurer briefly in 2006-2007. In order to keep the organization financially viable for many years to come, we are also eliminating our annual medal, but we hope to come out less frequently with higher quality medals, much like the color women's suffrage medal last year.

This past year has been like no other, and AINA is trying to capitalize on the move to high-tech interaction. In addition to the digital catalogs mentioned above, we are hoping to put together an on-line seminar on a Sunday in late January. Stay tuned for more updates. If you have not already done so, please send your email address to our Treasurer so we can keep you up to date. And if you change email addresses, please remember to let us know. ☺

# INTRODUCTION OF NEW AINA LEADERSHIP

After 18 years as President of the American Israel Numismatic Association, Mel Wacks is stepping down, saying "I have had the pleasure and privilege of serving longer than any other AINA President, and it is time to pass the baton to a new generation." Mel has been on the AINA Board of Directors almost continuously since the organization began in 1968. Mel is also resigning as Editor of the organization's prize-winning magazine, "The Shekel," after serving as Editor-in-Chief or Editor since 2013. Mel will remain on the Board and will continue to contribute articles to *The Shekel*. Mel Wacks also designed AINA's website, and more than ten of the annual membership medals. He is the "Father of the Shekel Prize," that has been given annually to the authors of the best book on the subject of Judaic or Holy Land numismatics and heads the judging committee.

The new AINA board includes Simcha Kuritzky as the President of AINA, Oded Paz as the Vice President, Josh Prottas as Treasurer and Aaron Oppenheim as Secretary. Mike Mooney will be handling social media and the AINA website. Chaya Sara Oppenheim is taking over the role

as the new editor of *The Shekel*.

Simcha Kuritzky is the first AINA president who has not been a part of the founding of the organization. He began collecting coins in 1971, and slowly built up his commemorative medal collection over the years. Simcha served as the Treasurer for AINA in 2006-2007 and is now enthusiastic about bringing energy to AINA as the new president.

Josh Prottas was born in Connecticut in 1961. He has been interested in coins most of his life, first as a collector of Lincoln cents, then as a vest pocket dealer going to coin shows. He has a Bachelor's degree from Brandeis University and a Masters from New York University. He has volunteered and served on several non-profit art boards such as the Museum Trustee Association and the Real Estate Council of Carnegie Hall.

Josh is a life member of the American Numismatic Association and he also serves as a judge for the numismatic exhibits at the annual World's Fair of Money. He is a life member of AINA. He has been on the Board for 20 years and most recently served as the Vice President.

*Continued*



Josh runs a small real estate company with properties in New York and Connecticut. He actively works with attorneys, accountants and executors of estates involving coins, and gold and silver bullion. He is based in New York City and buys and sells for clients throughout the country.

He looks forward to working with the board in his new position as treasurer of AINA as we navigate the future of this organization for the benefit of all its members and the numismatic community as a whole.

Aaron Oppenheim's numismatic involvement, particularly with Israel and Judaic numismatics, dates back to his late grandfather, Maurice Frankenhuis, who was one of the original founders of the AINA organization, and nurtured

his passion for collecting from a very early age. Over the last five decades, Aaron has expanded his personal collecting interests, which spans Jewish history from ancient coins to modern day Israel, including related coins and medals of Jewish interest. He participates in New York's SIP meetings and regularly presents topics of numismatic interest. Aaron is eager to help promote this hobby and educate Jewish history through the medium of coins and medals.

Chaya Sara Oppenheim is the new editor of *The Shekel* and is unique as a third generation AINA member. She is currently studying English and history at Barnard College of Columbia University and looks forward to bringing *The Shekel* issues to publication. ♪

# THE TEN MOST BEAUTIFUL JUDAIC MEDALS

By Mel Wacks

Reprinted courtesy of [www.coinsweekly.com](http://www.coinsweekly.com).

For the past five decades it has been my pleasure to coordinate the production of over 50 medals for the Jewish-American Hall of Fame. I have worked closely with the medalists to create commemoratives of historical significance and of the highest artistry. I am also on the

board of the American Medallic Sculpture Association and chair the committee that chooses the American Medal of the Year. So, I am thinking often about medal designs. But, I have never before thought about my favorites — so here it goes (in chronological order):



1. The Renaissance medal was originally thought to portray a celebrated member (1510-1568) of a Marrano family who was one of the richest women in the world, owner of a fleet of ships and the Mendes Bank, the second largest bank in the world. She fled Lisbon after the death of her husband and eventually settled in Constantinople, as did her niece, who had the same

name. The younger Gracia Nasi is now believed to be portrayed on this medal, possibly created on the occasion of her marriage.

The inscription on this very rare medal is: Gratzia (or Gracia) Nasi in Hebrew along with the Latin inscription A[nno] Æ[tatis] XVIII (Gracia Nasi, in her eighteenth year), and an incised “P” for the sculptor Pastorino de’ Pastorini.

*Continued*



Photos courtesy of <http://www.historicalartmedals.com>.

2. Jacques Wiener (1815--1899) was born in Hoerstgen, Germany, studied in Paris and then settled in Brussels. He undertook what was to be a series of 50 medals, each 59 mm in diameter, entitled “Medals of the Most Remarkable Edifices of Europe,” portraying the exterior and interior of monuments with a degree of precision of details that had not yet been attempted. Of these, the majority were cathedrals, churches and mosques; one was a synagogue. However, this intricate and minute

work, took its toll, and by 1874 (age 59) he completely lost his eyesight.

This bronze medal commemorates the dedication of the Glockengasse Synagogue in Cologne on August 29, 1861. Architect Ernst Zwirner’s Moorish design is an early example of a style adopted by many synagogues built in Central Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This majestic synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis during Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938. The site is now occupied by the Cologne Opera.



3. Boris Schatz (1866 – 1932) was a Lithuanian Jewish artist and sculptor who settled in Palestine and founded the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in 1906. He created numerous large bas reliefs and medals depicting scenes of Jewish

life and famous Jewish personalities.

This medal inscription is: “Plug a big shofar to our freedom.” The blowing of the shofar (a ram’s horn) is a ritual performed by Jews on Rosh Hashanah (New Year).



4. According to <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>: “The Jewish artist Ben Shahn (1898-1969) was born in Lithuania and went to the USA as a child. At fourteen he was apprenticed to a lithographer’s shop, where his training included endless drawing

of the alphabet until the forms were good enough to be printed. The discipline and craft learned then stayed with him.” The medal’s design includes the entire Hebrew alphabet, consisting of 22 letters, enclosed within a circle surrounding

the Hebrew “aleph” which is placed in the center. In addition, “[Shahn felt that] the letters of the Hebrew alphabet ... celebrate the divine origin and mystic value of letters. The balance of black and white recalls his workshop training, which stressed the importance of space around the letters as well as the shapes themselves.”

Interestingly, the Hebrew alphabet bears no relation to the *raison d’être*

for the medal – the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Israel State Airline “El Al” – represented by a stylized dove and the Hebrew inscription: “Bring back my sons from far and my daughters from the end of the earth” (Isaiah 43:6). Issued in 1969 by the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation.



5. I was fortunate in being able to visit the Canadian medalist Dora de Pédey-Hunt (1913-2008) in her home, when my wife and I purchased several medals. Dora’s Adam and Eve 70mm medal (1965) has maintained a central position in our home ever since. This is a delightful medal, with the unclothed couple sitting on a branch (of the Tree of Knowledge?), with a (wise?) owl looking on. As Dora writes in her book “Medal’s”: “The medal

always intrigues me. I find it equally exciting to make one or to own one ... Clasp it in your fist, let your warmth enter the cold metal and then take it to the window. Watch it: the light hits some edges, hidden crevices appear, there are some mounds you had not even seen before. Feel the tension of the surface. There is life underneath. It is not a cold piece of metal anymore: trees grow here, bodies leap high, faces emerge.”





Photos courtesy of Monnaie de Paris.

6. *Thérèse Dufresne* (1937-2010) created more than 50 art medals for Monnaie de Medaille from 1964 to 2000. Her monumental (135mm) view of Jerusalem and the Valley of the Kings makes these ancient

buildings sway as if they were in a Disney movie. The extremely high relief is thrilling to touch. A smaller (81mm) version is still available from the Paris Mint's website.



Photos courtesy of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame  
([www.amuseum.org/jahf](http://www.amuseum.org/jahf)).

7. In 1969, I launched the Jewish-American Hall of Fame series of medals, and this has become my life's work. You can read my book at <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/556056>. The innovative trapezoidal shape was created by Victor Ries, and we have been fortunate to obtain the creative services of leading medalists such

as Eugene Daub, who has designed over a dozen commemoratives in the series. I love all of these medals, but I must admit that among my favorite is Albert Einstein by Prof. Robert Russin (1970). The Einstein portrait is in high relief, bringing to life this brilliant scientist who was also a humanitarian – and comfortably fitting in this unique shape.



8. I helped create the Maccabee Mint in 1972. We only issued two medals, but the first (Bereshet = Genesis) is one of the most beautiful medals ever made. It was sculpted by Brian Watkins; I don't know if he ever created another medal. The Genesis medal features the first word in the Bible "Bereshet" ("In

the beginning"). The exceptional design depicts the transformation of the formless earth into the waters and firmament – with the waters spilling over the edge onto the other side. The formless earth is highly polished, in contrast to the patina on the rest of the medal. On the edge is stamped "Medallic Art Co."



9. The Jewish-American Hall of Fame also commissioned and/or distributed about three dozen special commemorative medals from 1981 through 2019, of which the Marc Chagall Centennial medal by Marika Somogyi is certainly one of the

most beautiful. The medal features a self-portrait of the imaginative artist, along with images from his paintings — including an embracing couple floating through a space in the medal.



Photos courtesy of Long Hu.

10. To bring this list up to date, here is a medal that hasn't been issued yet. This tribute to Jerusalem and the three monotheistic faiths was designed by Chinese medalist and architect Long Hu, with a little input from me and with the sculptural genius of Eugene Daub and Jim Licaretz. It is a sculptural tour de force of this ancient city and other important sites in and near the Holy Land. Within the Star of David's six points are the Citadel (Tower of David) in Jerusalem, the ancient city of Akko, Petra of Jordan, the St. Catherine's monastery in the Sinai Peninsula, and Old Jaffa. In the center, behind the cross, there is an inscription over the Western Wall: "HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN BROTHERS DWELL IN UNITY. PS. 133:1"

The ceiling of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, in the center of the reverse, is surrounded by arches containing six representative

religious buildings in the holy land: the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Church of St Mary Magdalene, the Dome of the Rock, the Baha'i Shrine and Gardens in Haifa, the Dormition Abbey, and the Ramban Synagogue near the Hurva Square. Around the rim is the inscription "Jerusalem and the Holy Land" in Hebrew and Arabi, and the outstretched wings of doves of peace.

These will be issued in 2021 in bronze (2.6" and 6.1") and copper-nickel (3.5").

I am frustrated that there are so many more beautiful medals I could include. Please contact me at [directorjahf@yahoo.com](mailto:directorjahf@yahoo.com) with Judaic-themed medals you think should be added to this list, or if you would like further information on Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals or the upcoming Tribute to Jerusalem and the Three Monotheistic Faiths.🕍

# RUTH BADER GINSBURG (1933-2020)

COURTESY OF [WWW.AMUSEUM.ORG/JAHF](http://WWW.AMUSEUM.ORG/JAHF)  
(JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME)



Medal designed by Eugene Daub (2013).

When Ruth Bader Ginsburg was appointed by President Bill Clinton and sworn in as the 107th justice to the United States Supreme Court on August 10, 1993, she became the second woman justice (Sandra

Day O'Connor was the first) and the first Jewish woman ever to sit on the Court. The first Jewish Supreme Court Justice had been Louis Brandeis, appointed by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916.



President Clinton announces his selection of Ruth Bader Ginsburg for the Supreme Court.

*Continued*



Calling Ginsburg's appointment "the most significant and thrilling Jewish-American event of the year," the Jewish-American Hall of Fame issued a special medal in her honor, that also commemorated its 25th anniversary. The 39mm 1 oz. pure silver medals were designed by Hal Reed, winner

of the American Numismatic Association's Numismatic Art Award for Excellence in Medallion Sculpture. After receiving the commemorative, Justice Ginsburg wrote: "I was touched beyond description ... and cherish the special medal."

Twenty years later, Supreme



Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was selected as the 2013 Jewish-American Hall of Fame honoree by a distinguished Advisory Board of leading Jewish historians and organizational leaders. The Ginsburg medal crowns a year of impressive achievements for sculptor Eugene Daub, who earlier this year received an Honorary Doctorate from the Academy of Art, University of San Francisco, and attended the dedication of his statue of Rosa Parks in the National Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol – the first full-sized statue authorized and funded by Congress since the 1870s.

The over 2" diameter Ruth Bader Ginsburg medals have the distinctive rounded-trapezoidal shape, created by sculptor Victor Ries, that has distinguished the Jewish-American Hall of Fame series since it was launched in 1969. The reverse features Moses, holding the Ten Commandments—represented by the first ten letters of the ancient Hebrew alphabet. The great lawgiver is based on a sculpture by Hermon MacNeil in the eastern pediment of the Supreme Court Building. Inscribed is an extract from Ginsburg's remarks when she received the Albert D. Chernin Award given



annually by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs: “I am a judge, born, raised, and proud of being a Jew. The demand for justice runs through the entirety of the Jewish history and Jewish tradition.



Three great lawmakers in the eastern pediment of the US Supreme Court Building were carved by Herman A. McNeil — Moses is in the center, Confucius on the left, and Solon on the right.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born in Brooklyn on March 15, 1933. She was an excellent student in school and was confirmed with honors from the East Midwood Jewish Center. At James Madison High School, she played the cello in the orchestra, was a member of Arista, was a cheerleader and a baton twirler, and the school newspaper editor.

RUTH BADER  
1584 East 9th Street  
Arista, Treas. of Go-Getters, School  
Orchestra, Twirlers, Sec. to English  
Department Chairman, Feature Ed-  
itor Term Newspaper  
Cornell University



Ruth Bader in her high school yearbook.

*Continued*

One of only nine women at Harvard Law School in 1956, Ginsburg and her female classmates were asked by the dean why they were occupying seats that would otherwise be filled by men.

After transferring and graduating (tying for first in class) from Columbia Law School, Ginsburg became the second woman to join the faculty of Rutgers Law School. When she discovered that her salary was lower than that of her male colleagues, she joined an equal pay campaign with other women teaching at the university, which resulted in substantial increases

for all the complainants. Prompted by her own experiences, Ginsburg established the ACLU Women's Rights Project in 1972 so that "artificial barriers are removed, and avenues of opportunity [are] held open to women."

The National Women's Hall of Fame sums up Ginsburg's service on the Supreme Court as: "Justice Bader Ginsburg has become known for her scholarly, balanced opinions and forthright personal courage. A cancer survivor herself, she has assisted thousands by her example of frank discussion of the state of her health and early diagnosis." ♪



Supreme Court official photograph, 2012.

# AMULET DEMONSTRATES CATHOLIC-JEWISH CONNECTION

By Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

The Crusades. The Spanish Expulsion. The Inquisition. These are what most people know about Jewish life under the Catholics in late medieval and renaissance Europe. Yet one amulet speaks to us of a very different relationship, where Jewish scholarship flourished and spread, not only throughout the Jewish world, but also into the Christian world. This scholarship resulted in the philosophy known as *kabbalah*.

The Hebrew word קבלה *kabbalah* means transmission or reception. The Kabbalistic philosophy used this term to refer to the transfer of secret, arcane knowledge of cosmology and the proper interpretation of the Jewish Bible. The main Kabbalistic work is ספר הזוהר (*Sefer HaZohar*) Book of Brilliance. This book came to light, and was probably composed, by Jews in late 13th century Christian Spain. It claims to be a compilation of teachings by the Second Century CE scholar Shimon Bar Yokhai.

Books have been written on the subject of Kabbalah, but the central ideas are these. There is one God, who is composed of several

attributes, both male and female. These attributes form a hierarchy, from the unknowable and completely spiritual אין סוף (*En Sof*) Infinite, to the almost-physical שכינה (*Shekhina*) Divine Presence here on Earth. The Shekhina is constantly threatened by demons, and can only be safeguarded by human intervention, particularly the religious rituals incumbent upon Jewish men. The similarity between this belief and the popular medieval romance story, where a princess is rescued from a dragon by a man of pure heart, is probably responsible for how quickly this philosophy spread throughout Jewish communities in Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. The parallels between this belief and the fervent desire of Jews to have their communities in exile redeemed by a משיח בן דוד (*Moshiakh Ben Dovid*) King descended from David, is probably responsible for the inclusion--in all traditional prayer books--of quotations from the Zohar and Kabbalistic formulae stating that the recitation of such-and-such a prayer is to help re-unite the Heavenly and Earthly aspects of God.

The Italian nobleman Giovanni Pico (1463-94) was the founder of the Christian school of Kabbalah.

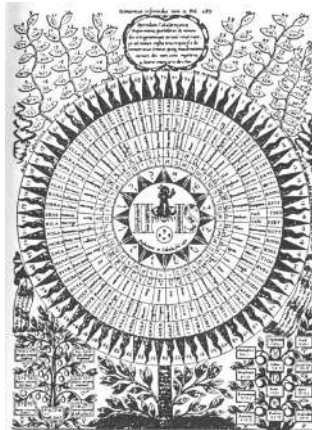
*Continued*

As a renaissance scholar, he was interested in studying ancient texts. He was tutored by Jewish scholars in Hebrew and Jewish holy works, and decided to apply many kabbalistic ideas to his own Catholicism. The resulting philosophy spread to other noblemen in Italy, then to France, and then to newly-Protestant England and Germany. Its popularity in the Christian world was restricted to mystics and nobility--it never affected the Catholic mass or

catechism, and most of its followers formed secret societies (such as the Masons). The elements unique to Christian Kabbalah are the assigning of God's various characteristics to members of the Christian Trinity, and using the techniques of permutation, substitution, acronym, and numeric value of Hebrew letters to create references to the Christian savior, Jesus of Nazareth, in the Jewish scriptures.



Depicted is the obverse and reverse of the amulet.



A reproduction of a cosmological drawing containing many of the same mystical elements as the amulet.

Pictured in this article are two products of the Christian Kabbalists. First is the obverse and reverse of the

amulet, and second is a reproduction of a cosmological drawing (from Athanasius Kircher, *Oedipus*

*Aegyptiacus*, Rome 1652) which contains many of the same elements. Amulets are devices which are worn to ward away bad luck or bring good luck. Every culture has amulets of one type or another; cast, struck, or engraved metal disks have been commonly used throughout Europe, the Middle East, India, and the Orient. This particular amulet was cast in Provence (now southeastern France) in the 16th or early 17th centuries. Significant numbers of these have been found, so it is likely that it was cast over a period of several decades. As Provence is along the Mediterranean, it may have been used by sailors or travelers for protection against storms, much as saints' medals were used.

Both the amulet and the drawing prominently portray the most holy Name in the Bible, the *Tetragrammaton* or Name of Four Letters (*Yod Heh Vov Heh*). This is the Name peculiar to the God of Israel, which was only recited by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies (the center of the Temple

in Jerusalem) on *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement), the holiest day of the Jewish year. Jewish law prohibits reciting this name under any other circumstances, or writing it on anything which might be thrown away. Therefore, this name is represented by the Hebrew numeral 4 (ד) in the article text. Later Christian Hebraists placed this name on coins and decided to call it *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, but neither of these pronunciations are accepted by traditional Jews.

The reverse of the amulet portrays many elements found on Jewish amulets and mystical inscriptions. In the center is a box divided into twelve sections, and in each section is a different permutation of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. Permutations, called *תמורה* (*temura*), are believed to enhance the supernatural power of the word permuted. These same permutations appear at the bottom right of the drawing, along with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and signs of the zodiac.

Surrounding this are four inscriptions:

This is My Eternal Name (Exodus 3:15)

זה שמי לעלם

Lord of Hosts, He is My Name

ד' צבאות הוא שמו

Lord, His Eternal Name, Lord

ד' שמו לעולם ד'

I am the Lord, that is my Name (Isaiah 42:8)

אני ד' הוא שמי



These same inscriptions appear to be included in the center section of the drawing, inside of the IHS, which are the first three letters (*iota, eta, and sigma*) of Jesus' name in Greek. The first inscription is part of Exodus 3:15, but the others do not appear to be direct Biblical quotes.

Around the outside of the box are the names of four archangels: אוריאל Uriel, גבריאל Gabriel, רפאל Rafael, and מיכאל Michael. The names appear in the traditional positions (as described in the *Zohar* and other works), with God in the center and Uriel in the East (forward, at the top of the amulet). These same names frequently appear in contemporary Jewish amulets, but always in a different sequence and along with the fifth name נוריאל Nuriel, so that the initial letters of the names spells ארגמן (*Argaman*) purple, one of the colors used in the curtains of the Tabernacle.

The Five Books of Moses describe angels, but they are not named and it is not clear if they are humans in God's service or supernatural beings. Once the Jewish kingdom was conquered and the Jews went into exile (c. 580 BCE), they came into contact with the sophisticated angeologies and demonologies of the Assyrians and Babylonians. The Book of Daniel describes and names unambiguously supernatural creatures. The Talmud, which contains oral histories dating back to the exile, but was not committed to writing until the late Roman era, describes angels and demons, as

well as amulets. However, Jewish authorities discouraged belief in specific angels, lest they be worshiped in God's stead, so the history of individual angels named on the amulet are a hodgepodge of folklore. Uriel is the Angel of the Sun, the Prince of Light and teacher of arcane knowledge. Rafael is a healer, but also described as the angel who exiled Adam and Eve from Eden. Gabriel is a popular messenger, who also carried out God's judgment against Sodom and Gomorrah, and hence is the Angel of War. Michael is the guardian angel of the people Israel, and, according to later legend, the subduer of Babylon and Satan.

The obverse of the amulet is unambiguously Christian. In the center is Jesus' head, complete with halo, and the term לחם פנים (*lekhem ponim*) Showbread. The showbread were 12 unleavened cakes which were kept in the Temple to represent the 12 Tribes of Israel (Exodus 25:30 and Leviticus 24:5-9). Some Christians saw these cakes as foreshadowing the Christian communion wafer, where unleavened bread is used as a symbol of Jesus' body and teachings.

Surrounding this portrait are three rings within a pentagon. The pentagon is a symbol for the five wounds Jesus is said to have suffered on the cross. The innermost ring has 5 different names for sheep or lambs: כבש *keves*, כשב *kesev*, שה *seh*, צאן *tzohn*, רחל *rakheyl*. The middle ring has different names for son:

בר *bar*, בן *ben*, ילד *yeled*, בן זיוו *ben ziviv*, שילה *shilo*. *Shilo* is actually a reference to Genesis 49:10, where the patriarch Israel blesses his son Judah by saying that he shall rule over his brethren until *Shilo*. Some interpret this literally as “that which is his”, while some Christians interpret *Shilo* as a coded reference to Jesus. The outermost ring has the five-word quote זה שמי לעולם וזה זכרי (Exodus 3:15) “This is My Eternal Name and this is My memorial.”

Around the outside of the pentagon are 5 spellings of the name Jesus, from three to seven letters: ישו ישוע יהוה יהושוע יהושע. The central one, יהוה *Yehoshua*, became the most popular among Christian Kabbalists and appears as the center bar of the letter *eta* in the diagram. This name was invented by Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) as a transformation of the Tetragrammaton.

He held that God was known to the patriarchs by the Three-Letter Name שדי *Shaday*, to Jews since the Exodus by the Four-Letter Name, but after the coming of the Messiah, He would be known by a Five-

Letter Name, which was simply the letter *ו* inserted in the middle of the Tetragrammaton. It should be noted that the last two spellings, which include the letter *ע*, are variants of the name Joshua (the best-known Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses' death).

Surrounding all this are a small cross and three inscriptions: וזה שמו (Jeremiah 23:6) “And this is His name by which He is called: Lord of our righteousness”, יהי שמו לעולם לפני שמש ינין שמו (Psalm 72:17) “His Name will endure forever; in the presence in the sun His Name shall flourish”, ויקרא שמו פלא יועץ אל גבור אבי עד שר שלום (Isaiah 9:5) “and his Name is called Wonderful, Advisor to Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

This amulet is perhaps one of the best examples of how a small piece of metal can represent so much history, folklore, and culture. It brings to us a world thousands of miles away, which has been gone for centuries, and whose basic precepts may be completely alien to us. ׀

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# MOSSAD MEDALS COMMEMORATE MONUMENTAL HUMANITARIAN MISSIONS: COINS THAT TELL STORIES OF JEWISH HISTORY

By Eve Glover

Former Mossad agent and world-renowned film consultant and museum curator, Avner Avraham, started producing coins last year to commemorate and teach about historic Mossad missions. His partner, Roy Segev, is the designer. The raised symbols, signs and codes on the medals make the stories come to life in a multi-dimensional way. It takes three months to painstakingly create each intricately designed coin. The medals are six centimeters in diameter; while that's large for a coin, it's still a very limited amount of space for so much detailed information to be conveyed. Since each mission is told simply through visual imagery, it's easy to imagine and decipher the events that unfolded.

The process begins with a sketch, and then before it is designed and sent to a manufacturer, intensive research and fact checking is conducted to ensure historical

accuracy. The medals come with detailed brochures that describe the corresponding Mossad missions in Hebrew and English.

Avraham explains, "When I was in school as a young student, I didn't like history. I didn't like the way they taught us with books with no pictures. I think the coins and the brochures are a creative and innovative way to commemorate and make you want to learn about Mossad missions and the history of Israel." Avraham donates coins to the heroes of the missions. The rest can be purchased at lectures, museum shops and online. Avraham will continue to create new variations after the 100 bronze and 100 silver plated coins he's produced sell out. The medals illustrate six different Mossad humanitarian missions, and a seventh is currently in production. They can be displayed on plexiglass stands.

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## OPERATION EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

From 1951-1952, the Mossad airlifted more than 120,000 Iraqi Jews, which was almost the entire Jewish community of Iraq, out of the country and surreptitiously brought them over to Israel. This mission, called Operation Ezra and Nehemiah, is named after important Jewish figures in the Tanakh who led exiled Babylonian Jews to Israel in the 5th century BCE, foreshadowing future events. It is also known as Operation Babylon.

The Farhoud, translated from Arabic to mean “pogrom” or “violent dispossession” were violent riots that took place in Baghdad, Iraq on June 1 – June 2, 1941 during Shavout. At least 179 Jews were killed, thousands were injured and raped and 900 Jewish homes, along with stores and synagogues, were pillaged and decimated. Shockingly, even the Iraqi police joined in on the anti-Semitic attacks. The Farhoud was inspired by the Nazi movement and is remembered as “the beginning of the end of the Jewish community of Iraq.”

Jews had lived in Iraq peaceably since 6th century BCE, hundreds of years before a preponderance of Muslims called Iraq their home. When Iraq was established as a state under the British Mandate twenty years prior to the violent Farhoud,

Iraqi Jews were granted citizenship and held powerful positions in the political sphere. The Farhoud, coupled with Iraq’s pro-British government being overthrown by Nazi supporters, dramatically and forever altered life for Iraqi Jews.

In 1950, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Tawfiq al-Suwaidi, agreed to let Iraqi Jews vacate the country under the condition that they leave their passports and ID cards behind and never return. Al-Suwaidi did not want to allow the Jews to go to Israel because of her enemy status with Iraq. On the first flight, the Mossad sent an agent, Shlomo Hillel, to fly the Jews to Cyprus before secretly transferring them to the Jewish State via an unmarked El Al plane.

On the obverse of the coin, you can see the demarcation of the route they flew over; from Baghdad to Cyprus, and then from Cyprus to Tel Aviv. There is a blue Star of David, and a yellow star, reminiscent of the badge Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust. Segev, the designer, took the first letter of the word “Farhoud” in Hebrew, English and Arabic, and configured them together to make them look like the yellow star, strikingly illustrating the parallels between Nazi Germany and the Farhoud. A famous picture of a long line of crowded Iraqi Jews

*Continued*

anxiously waiting to board the plane is also engraved on the obverse of the coin, and on the reverse side there is a nurse shown helping passengers walk down from the stairs of the plane after they landed

at Lod airport (now Ben Gurion). After a long flight in a cargo plane, Israeli medical teams were sent to meet the immigrant Jews that just arrived in case they were in need of care.



Depicted is the obverse and reverse of the Operation Ezra and Nehemiah medal.

## OPERATION FINALE

Avner Avraham became known as the world expert in Operation Finale through his renowned exhibitions and work as a consultant for the Hollywood film, *Operation Finale*, starring Ben Kingsley. Last year, he decided to produce a coin to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the operation wherein Mossad agents successfully captured Adolf Eichmann, the infamous Nazi head of the Jewish department. Avraham describes Eichmann as, “The machine; he was the one responsible for the schedule of how to send all the Jews to death, how to manage all the trains, even up until the last minute. And he’s also known as the one who came to Hungary and sent most of the Jews to death.”

On the obverse of the coin, it says, “The Capture of Adolf Eichmann” in Hebrew and English, and there are six columns which commemorate the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust. On the left side it shows Eichmann’s neighborhood, in San Fernando, Buenos Aires, and his family on Garibaldi Street. You can also see the El Al Bristol Britannia plane, a special flight that was sent to Argentina to bring Eichmann to Israel. On the right side, there is a map of Israel and the blue Magen David (Star of David).

After the Mossad fully spotted and recognized Eichmann attempting to conceal his identity under a false name, Ricardo Klement, they questioned him and then sent out a message, “The



*Continued*

dancer is red,” which is denoted on the coin. When the code is spoken in Hebrew, it sounds like “Ricardo is Adolf.”

On the other side of the coin, there is the haunting symbol of the yellow star with the word “Jude” inside it that Jews had to wear during the Holocaust. There are also images that represent Auschwitz, like a barbed wire fence. The SS symbol is in the middle of the target, because the target is to find and kill the Nazis. On the left side, there is an Israeli

flag and the gloves that the Mossad agent Peter Malchin wore. Malchin was a Holocaust survivor, and he didn’t want to touch the evil when he jumped on top of Eichmann. The gloves were also used as protection. During World War II, the Nazis used to hide cyanide in their teeth in case they were caught and needed to commit suicide, and the Mossad agents who captured Eichmann were worried that Eichmann would try to bite them.



Depicted is the obverse and reverse of the Operation Finale medal

## OPERATION ENTEBBE

On Sunday, June 27, 1976, Air France flight No. 139, en route to Paris from Tel Aviv, was hijacked by four Palestinian and German terrorists during a stopover in Athens. The terrorists took control over the plane carrying 254 passengers, many

of whom were Israeli citizens, and flew it to Uganda. On the back side of the coin, there is a map showing London and Paris; two cities where crucial evidence was gathered for Operation Entebbe. Patricia Martel, a nurse who was on the flight,

*Continued*

injured herself and pretended to have a miscarriage, so the terrorists released her and let her go to a hospital when they stopped to refuel in Libya. She flew to London the next day and provided the Mossad and British Intelligence Service, MI6, with crucial information.

Idi Amin, the cruel then-President of Uganda, conspired with the terrorists and ordered armed guards to be placed on the plane while they forced the hostages into an Entebbe airport terminal after landing in Uganda. The tower on the front of the coin is the tower of the old terminal, which is still in existence today. On Tuesday, the terrorists separated the Israelis and Jews from non-Israelis and non-Jews; anyone wearing identifying symbols of Judaism like a kippah or tallit was placed in the same room as the Israelis. When the terrorists released foreign hostages, they flew into Paris, where they were met and questioned by more than 35 multilingual Mossad agents, who gave the inside information they gathered to Sayeret Matkal, the Israeli elite unit of the IDF. On the back side of the coin, there is a small jet and a camera, representing the special Mossad agent who flew above Entebbe and took almost 100 arial photos of the area. The Mossad

developed the pictures and gave them to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who approved the launch of Operation Entebbe because of what he was shown. On the front of the coin, four Hercules planes are shown flying together towards Entebbe, as well as the iconic Mercedes that was part of the operation. To trick bystanders, one of the planes carried a Mercedes limousine and two Jeeps that were almost identical to the ones in Amin's motorcade.

On Saturday evening, July 3, 1976 in less than one minute, IDF commandos killed all the terrorists and released the rest of the hostages, who were flown into Tel Aviv the following day. On the back of the coin, there is a depiction of a very iconic picture of a C-130 airplane with a multitude of people surrounding it, which are the hostages being reunited with their families. Out of the 105 hostages, three were killed in crossfire during the rescue mission and one was killed by terrorists Amin hired while she was being treated in a Uganda hospital. On the front of the coin, inside the windows of the tower are four letters in Hebrew and English to commemorate them. Tragically, Lieutenant Colonel Yonatan Netanyahu was the only IDF soldier killed during the operation. □



Depicted is the front and back of the Operation Entebbe medal

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# WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A COIN?

By Aaron Oppenheim

One of the common questions asked about any coin is “what is it worth?” The answer always is, the price for a coin is based on the perceived value by the buyer.

Now for an interesting tale of two coins with a rich (pun intended) numismatic history of each that came across my radar.

## ELECTROTYPE COINS

Let’s begin with a brief explanation of a process known as “electrotyping” and how it has been applied to produce exceptional quality copies of authentic coins. This practice was in use by the British Museum more than a century ago, as described in an excellent article by Lief Davisson on the subject in NBS’s e-Sylum, from which the following is an excerpt:

Invented in 1838, the electrotyping process involves coating a mold of the object being duplicated in a conductive material, graphite, then connecting it to a wire and running a current through it while suspending it in an electrolyte solution along with a copper anode. The copper dissolves from the surface of the anode and is deposited on the surface of the graphite mold. This process was used extensively to create plates for letterpress printing and to create accurate replicas of works of art, among other uses. It was particularly suited to creating high quality coin replicas. When duplicating coins,

the process creates a uniface replica of one side of the coin, which could be joined to a copy of the other side and the edges smoothed to create a more accurate replica. The copper shell was also often gilt to represent silver or gold coins more accurately.

Electrotypes were widely produced by seal maker Robert Ready (1811-1901) and his sons for sale by the British Museum between 1859 and 1931, using examples from the Museum’s own extensive collection. The Museum displayed these, as well as making them available for purchase and for education. Electrotypes, while convincing, are usually fairly straightforward to distinguish from the actual pieces by examining the edge for a seam, comparing the weight to an actual piece, or by a stamp of RR, R, or MB on the edge (which stand for Robert Ready, one of his sons, or the Latin name for the British Museum respectively).

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Electrotypes are an approachable and highly accurate way to represent coins that are otherwise unobtainable for most (or all) collectors. Individual electrotypes

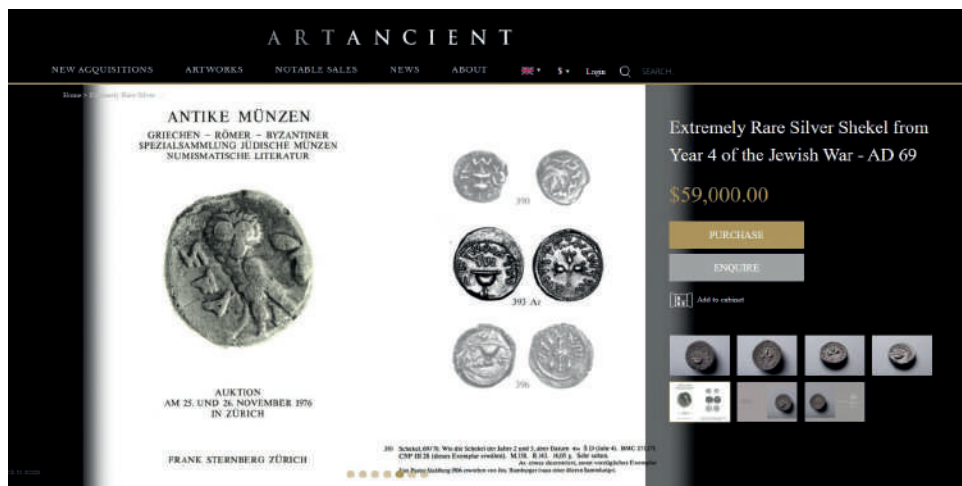
(with sides joined or separate) can be found for sale or in auctions, and electrotypes of particularly rare coins can command high prices.

ORIGINAL YEAR 4 JEWISH SHEKEL

Among the rare coins once deemed worthy of its desirability and a good candidate to duplicate in the form of an electrotype for its affordability, would include a rare year of the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans that lasted five years and ended with the destruction of the second Jewish Temple in 67 CE.

One such example is a rare First Jewish Revolt Year 4 coin, which is beyond the budget of most collectors. Such a coin is seldom offered and is currently available for sale for \$59,000.

Described as “One of just 40 recorded year 4 shekels; an extremely





rare, well provenanced and highly desirable piece of Jewish heritage. Minted by the Jewish people during the First Jewish-Roman War, also known as the Great Revolt. Struck in Jerusalem in year four of the conflict (69/70 CE),

shortly before the destruction of the Second Temple.

The obverse with a ritual chalice from the Second Temple. The vessel represents either the cup used by the



First Revolt Jewish Shekel Year 4  
Images courtesy of ArtAncient.

High Priest for the Tamid service, to pour wine upon the altar, or the golden omer cup, used for holding

fruit and grain during the festival of Pesach. The legend in Paleo-Hebrew reads:

“Shekel Yisrael” (“Shekel of Israel”)

“Sh D (Shana Dalet)” (“Year Four”)

The reverse with The three ripe buds/pomegranates, representing the staff of the High priest. The legend reads:

“Yerushalayim HaKadosha” (“Jerusalem the Holy”).

The provenance is detailed as follows:

From the collection of Pastor Stahlberg, purchased from Joseph Hamburger in 1906 and recorded as, “coming from an older collection.”

Subsequently from a French private collection of Frank Sternberg (1912 – 1994).

Frank Sternberg, Zurich, 25h November 1976, lot 393.

Subsequently French private collection.

# ELECTROTYPE YEAR 4 JEWISH SHEKEL



Electrotype First Revolt Year 4  
Jewish Shekel.

Almost as rare as finding such a prized coin, is the appearance of an electrotype of the aforementioned coin which appeared in auction from Roma Numismatics:

The description reads: Electrotype: Judaea. First Jewish War AR Shekel. Jerusalem, dated year 4 = 69/70 CE.

Omer cup with beaded rim, date above; "Shekel of Israel" in Paleo-Hebrew script around / Sprig of three pomegranates; "Jerusalem the Holy" in Paleo-Hebrew script around. Head, Guide -; cf. TJC 207; cf. Sofaer 36-7; cf. Hendin 1364. From a private English collection.



Close study of Original coin obverse & reverse (left) vs. Electrotype obverse & reverse (right) shows identical "birthmarks" of the same coin:

Obverse: edge indentation at 10:00 o'clock; die flaws in field between 4 and 5 o'clock. Reverse: die fill above left sprig of pomegranate; same edge unevenness at 12:00 o'clock.

*Continued*

## WILL THE REAL COIN PLEASE STAND UP!

When comparing the images of the original and the electrotype, the two coins appear virtually identical. It can be safely assumed that this illegitimate coin was fashioned from the single original coin, although it not known how many such electrotypes were produced.

To the novice collector, it may be difficult to distinguish the two coins from one another, as all the details have been faithfully reproduced. One true method as noted in Lief Davisson's article cited above is by checking the weight of both coins:

original: weight: 14.05 gm,  
diameter: 22.60mm

Electrotype: weight: 7.21gm,  
diameter: 22mm

The electrotype coin is half the weight of the original, nevertheless a solid representation of a mid-five figure coin. Electrotypes are collected in their own right unlike tourist or souvenir copies that are often poorly executed. The electrotype coin shown above sold for approximately \$150. And herein lies the answer to our original question, "what is this coin worth?"

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# ABRAHAM ACCORDS AND PEACE AGREEMENT ARE SIGNED AND CELEBRATED WITH NEW OFFICIAL MEDALS

Courtesy of [en.israelmint.com](http://en.israelmint.com).

With great excitement, Israel Coins and Medals Corp. is capturing the historic signing of the Peace Agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates on a State Medal, struck in fine gold and fine silver in tiny mintages.

The United Arab Emirates, located in the northeast of the Arabian Peninsula in the Persian Gulf, is a Federation of seven Arab-Muslim states, rich in oil. Its small population counts about ten million citizens, out of which only about one and a half million are UAE citizens. The others, who live and work there, come from outside the UAE.

The new Agreement will bring endless new trade opportunities for Israel, increasing its export volume, strengthening tourism and mutual economic growth, while the United Emirates will benefit from many advantages through the establishment of relations with Israel. This ground-breaking Agreement will result in economic, technological and state cooperation, creating a “new Middle East”. The new peace era brings hope for Israel, the Arab world and the entire world.

Designed by Ruben Nutels and minted by The Holy Land Mint, the medal commemorates the Abraham



*Continued*

Accords agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

On the face of the medal, center right is the United Emirates skyline, and in front to the left, there is a stylized picture of the Walls of Jerusalem and Tower of David. Above, a dove of peace with olive branch in its beak is shown and to its left, the word “peace” in English, Hebrew and Arabic. In the upper border, the inscription “Israel – United Emirates – Peace” is written

and the same inscription in Hebrew is placed in the lower border, between The Holy Land Mint trademark. On the reverse side, the United Emirates flag is shown to the left and Israeli flag is shown to the right, above them, the Israel State Emblem and beneath, “2020”.

Additionally, there are the inscriptions detailing the weight of “1oz. Fine Gold .9999” on the gold, “1oz. Fine Silver .999” on the silver, in English and Hebrew ✪

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## MEDAL COMMEMORATES U.S. EMBASSY MOVE TO JERUSALEM

In celebration of the 1-year anniversary since President Trump’s decision to move the American embassy to Jerusalem, the White House Gift Shop currently holds a commemorative coin “recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel” with a quote from Trump that “our greatest hope is for peace.” The coin

displays the American and Israeli flags alongside each other behind the embassy’s façade pictured on the obverse. On the reverse side, is the American eagle and the names of President Donald J. Trump and Ambassador David M. Friedman rimmed by the words “United States Embassy” and “Jerusalem, Israel.”





# PRIVATELY ISSUED MEDAL HONORS THE ABRAHAM ACCORDS

Reprinted courtesy of [www.einnews.com](http://www.einnews.com)



The front features Israeli and UAE flags flying over an intricate silhouette of the holy city of Jerusalem, Israel's eternal capital, and Abu Dhabi skylines, which merge together in symbolic unity.

Inspired by the words of the prophet Isaiah, “And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares” (Isaiah 2:4), the back of the medal features a sword that gradually morphs into symbols of peace, prosperity, agricultural and technological advancement.

“And He shall judge among the nations...and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword

against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” (Isaiah 2:4) On September 15, 2020, President Donald J. Trump hosted the signing of the “Abraham Accords,” a groundbreaking Middle East peace treaty normalizing relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. In signing the Accords, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) joined Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan as the only Arab nations to make peace with Israel.

*Continued*

“The Abraham Accords will prove to be the moment when the grievances of the past no longer overpowered the promises of the future in the Middle East” said Pastor Johnnie Moore in a statement to the media.

To mark this historic occasion Temple Medals has minted a limited quantity of ornate commemorative medals stunningly designed by master numismatic artist Aharon Shavo. The front of the medal is adorned with the Israeli and UAE flags, flying over an intricate silhouette of the holy city of Jerusalem, Israel’s eternal capital, and Abu Dhabi skylines, which merge together in symbolic unity.

Immediately below the skyline are the words “Abraham Accords” inscribed in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. Abraham was the father of monotheism. The familiar Bible character is referred to as ‘Abraham’ in the Christian faith, ‘Ibrahim’ in the Muslim faith, and ‘Avraham’ in the Jewish faith, and no person better symbolizes the potential for unity among these three great faiths. An eagle holding an olive branch and arrows, the Seal of the President of the United States, completes the front design.

The commemorative medal features a quote from the Koran “And if one inclines towards

peace, it inclines towards you.” It also has a quote from the Prophet Jeremiah “For I will give you lasting peace in this place.”

Temple Medals Director Jason Glick said, “These quotes encapsulate the central teachings of the faiths of Abraham; Judaism, Christianity and Islam, that one has a moral duty to seek out and embrace peace.”

The signature of Donald John Trump, without whose tireless efforts the “Abraham Accords” would not have been possible, rounds off the rear design. The President has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his determination and tenacity in making this historical and religiously significant Accords become a reality.

Temple Medals Director Jason Glick added, “In addition to peace between former enemies, the region and indeed the world will benefit from economic prosperity. There is a younger generation in the region that deserves better, safer and more prosperous lives. Immediately following the normalization, Israeli and Emirati companies signed agreements to work together for a cure for Covid 19, as well as cooperation in the fields of health, infrastructure, science, agriculture and energy.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the media, “Peace is a good thing and peace unites moderates, two of the most advanced economies in the world – Israel and the United Arab Emirates. We’re fighting Iran and the radicals who are trying to overthrow our order in the Middle East, subjugate people and propagate terrorism. So, this is good for peace, good for security, and good for prosperity. I think it’s good for the United States and good for Israel.”

King David, who wrote prophetically in so many of his Psalms, exhorts us in this way, “Seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34:15).

In fact, the Hebrew expression in Psalm 34 implies running and chasing peace, almost hunting it down. Indeed, the Bible repeatedly conveys God’s desire that we should be peacemakers, doing our best to live at peace with everyone.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Matthew 5:9)

There are also scriptural reasons to be encouraged by the new links of peace forming in the south. There are several positive references to Sheba and Dedan (the Persian Gulf area) in relation to Israel in biblical prophecy. One example is from Isaiah 60:6, with similar hints in Psalm 72:10 and Ezekiel 27.

Individuals can be part of these exciting times and the fulfillment of the biblical prophesy by acquiring this limited-edition Abraham Accords commemorative medal.

One-third of each commemorative medal sale will go directly to a fund that will help foster stronger economic ties and partnerships between the United Arab Emirates and the State of Israel. Not only will you be acquiring a highly collectible memento of this historic occasion, but also your purchase will allow you to directly partner with the peace process itself.

“Those who bless Israel will be blessed.” (Genesis 12:13) ☛

# WHAT ARE THE MOTIFS ON HEROD THE GREAT'S "YEAR 3" COINS PART III

By David M. Jacobson

Excerpt reprinted with permission from the author's original article entitled "Herod The Great, Augustus Caesar and Herod's "Year 3" Coins" that was originally published in *Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society* 2015 Volume 33



Fig. 1 Herod the Great, 8 prutot, 37-4 BCE. Unlisted variety, showing wing on the Dioscuri cap. Photo courtesy of the author.

## 2.4 Filleted palm branch; aplustre (*aphlaston*)

The palm branch with a fillet band attached to it was correctly identified by Meshorer (*AJC* 2: 20; *TJC*: 65) as a Greek victory symbol (Newell 1941: 69), often borne by the goddess Athena in images representing her in the guise of the Nikephoros (bearer of victory).<sup>22</sup> A filleted palm branch appears in saltire with a winged caduceus on a denarius struck by Q. Sicinius in Rome, im-

mediately before the outbreak of the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey in 49 BCE (*RRC*, no. 440/1).<sup>23</sup> This motif and a starred Dioscuri *pilos* are among prominent images carved in relief on marble plaques that decorated the walls of a hall dedicated to a hero cult at Pergamon in the Augustan period.<sup>24</sup> On Judaeen coins, a palm branch with a fillet attached had already featured on small bronze denomination of John Hyrcanus I (Jacobson 2013b).

*Continued*

As this device is employed on one of Herod's 'year 3' coins, it may refer to Actium and/or possibly Herod's victory over Antigonus six years previously, in 37 BCE.

The aplustre, the characteristic stern post of Greek and Roman galley ships, is depicted on Greek and Roman coins as a symbol of naval victory. It appears as major coin types on bronze issues of several Seleucid kings,<sup>25</sup> and on gold and

silver coins struck in Asia Minor for Cassius and Brutus (43/42 BCE) (*RRC*, no. 505). Octavian struck a denarius in 31/30 BCE, portraying a winged victory on one side and Octavian posing as Neptune with an aplustre on the other, in celebration of his victory at Actium (Fig. 9; *RIC* 12, no. 256).<sup>26</sup> Indeed, we find ships, or parts of ships, including the aplustre, widely depicted on monuments celebrating Actium.<sup>27</sup>



Fig. 9. Octavian. Autumn 31-29 BCE. AR. denarius (20 mm, 3.84 gm). Winged bust of Victory right / Octavian, as Neptune, standing left, right foot set on globe, holding sceptre and aplustre; inscription, to the left and right, [C] AESAR DIVI F ('Caesar, son of god') [Julius Caesar']. *RIC* 12, p. 59, no. 256. CNG Auction 61 (25 September, 2002), lot 1605. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.

Because there is no mention of Herod distinguishing himself in a naval contest,<sup>28</sup> it would be most reasonable to interpret the appearance of the aplustre on this coin as an expression of his desire to as-

sociate himself with the greatest triumph of his Roman patron, also manifested by Herod's benefactions to Nicopolis, founded to commemorate the famous naval battle (Jos., BJ 1.425; AJ 16.147).



Ref.	Actual coin motif		Interpretation of coin motif		Note
	Obverse	Reverse	Obverse	Reverse	
RPC 1.1: no. 4901 TJC, no. 44	<i>Pilos</i> of a dioscurus on a couch; flanked by 2 palm branches	Tripod with bowl ( <i>lebes</i> ), from which flames issue	Homage to an archetypal hero; i.e. abstract image of Herod.	Symbol of Apollo, patron deity of Augustus; i.e. abstract image of Augustus. The <i>lebes</i> with a lit offering indicates an act of homage.	Association of Herod with Augustus. Other client kings also struck coins pairing themselves with the Roman Princes.
RPC 1.1: no. 4902 TJC, no. 45	Macedonian shield	Crested helmet in profile	This coin type, which consists of a coupling of two military symbols, first appeared in the name of Alexander the Great and was also issued by his Macedonian successors.		There is evidence that Augustus modelled himself on Alexander the Great and Herod did too.
RPC 1.1: no. 4903 TJC, no. 46	Poppyhead with fillet bands	Winged caduceus ( <i>kerykeion</i> )	Symbol of Ceres, often featuring together with ears of wheat – signifying fertility and abundant crops, associated with peace.	Symbol of Mercury, whose attributes included concord and Felicitas (enduring success, good fortune), all qualities associated with peace.	Both are symbols of the <i>Aetas Aurea</i> of the <i>Pax Augusta</i> (as expressed on Roman coins and on the Ara Pacis).
RPC 1.1: no. 4904 TJC, no. 47	Filleted palm branch	Aplustre ( <i>aphlaston</i> )	Canonical victory emblem according to Graeco-Roman custom.	Symbol of naval success.	Reference to Augustus' greatest triumph, evidenced also by Herod's benefactions to Nicopolis. An aplustre was among the symbols employed on Augustan monuments and coins to commemorate Actium.

Table 2. Summary of the motifs on Herod's 'year 3' coins and their interpretations

### 3. The Coin Motifs and the Era of 'Year 3' Coins

Table 2 summarises our interpretations for the motifs on Herod's 'year 3' coins. Clearly, this series of images are demonstrably programmatic; headed by metaphorical references to Herod and Augustus; next follows an acknowledgement to their hero, Alexander the Great and his military successes; and the last two coins in the sequence commemorate Augustus' momentous victories and achievement of peace. The images therefore mesh well with themes associated with Augustan ideology and some can also be connected with Herod, especially the Dioscuri *pilos* mounted on a couch, shown on the obverse of Herod's largest coin. Only the aplustre on the smallest coin in the series of dated coins would seem to refer directly to the great naval battle of Actium, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf in Epirus on 2 September, 31 BCE (Marshak 2006: 215; 2015: 162 and n. 29; cf. Magness 2001: 168–169). On the strength of this identification, the 'year 3' coins of Herod must all postdate that pivotal moment in history. Lorber (2013) has also sought to identify a unifying theme for the 'year 3' coin series. She has endeavoured to demonstrate that Herod cultivated a special affiliation with Dionysus and the mystery cult centred on this deity, which she sees running through the motifs on the four denominations. Her ideas are ingenious and attractive up to a point. However, in my view, the majority

of the symbols depicted, namely the tripod-*lebes*, the plumed helmet, Macedonian shield, caduceus, filleted palm branch and aplustre do not exhibit any direct connection with Dionysus; indeed, the tripod-*lebes* and caduceus are more commonly associated with other deities, namely Apollo and Hermes, respectively, as Lorber admits (*idem*: 137–138, 141). I therefore find her rather sweeping generalisations somewhat far-fetched. What is certainly clear is that the Graeco-Roman polytheistic symbolism represented on the four dated coins of Herod show that they are the product of a gentile milieu. This would strengthen the case for Samaria-Sebaste as their place of production. It could also help to explain the selection of ivy wreath decoration on the star-topped *pilos* that features on the largest denomination, discussed in Section 2.1. Lorber's Dionysian interpretation of Herod's 'year 3' coins obliges her to commit to a date prior to Mark Antony's defeat at Actium, in view of Antony's well known identification with Dionysus (*idem*: 127). Therefore she accepts that LT stands for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Herod's reign as king (38/37 BCE), in agreement with Ariel and Fontanille.

As I have shown, the iconographic evidence indicates otherwise, namely a date after Octavian's victory at Actium in September, 31 BCE. Marshak (2006: 215, 233) reached this very conclusion, although he based it on his association of two of the coin motifs, the Dioscuri *pilos*

Continued

and the poppy specifically with Herod's foundation of Sebaste at Samaria in 27 BCE.

If, as has been deduced from the coin iconography, the 'year 3' date-mark on the coins does not refer to Herod's regnal era in Judaea beginning in the autumn of 40 BCE, then alternative possibilities need to be sought. The latest dating suggested for these coins is February ½ CE by Mahieu (2012: 375–394), who argues that the monogram is a ligature of the letters PT (both Greek and Latin), standing for *Pater Patriae*, a title that Augustus received on 5 February 2 BCE. According to Mahieu these coins, with their decidedly pagan and military motifs, were issued by the Roman general, Publius Quinctilius Varus to celebrate his victories in Judaea, in the wake of Herod's death. Hers is a somewhat idiosyncratic proposal in view of the fact that she could not cite any independent evidence for PT as an abbreviation for *Pater Patriae* and was unable to supply a sensible reason for coins to be issued by Varus in Herod's name.

A more credible era for the 'year 3' coins is one marked by Herod's re-confirmation as king of Judaea in the spring of 30 BCE proposed by Marshak (2006: 230–235; 2015: 161–162 and n. 28, 346–349). The crucial meeting in Rhodes on that occasion, between Octavian Caesar and Herod enabled the latter to retain his throne, despite having declared support for Mark Antony in the

civil war (Jos., *BJ* 1.386–393; *AJ* 15.183–196). Herod's affirmation of allegiance to Octavian not only ensured his political survival by confirming his kingship, but resulted in a considerable enlargement of his realm. The annexed territories included Samaria, the districts of Gadara and Hippos on the eastern flank of the Jordan valley and much of the valuable coastal strip, covering Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa and Strato's Tower, which became Caesarea (Jos., *BJ* 1.396; *AJ* 15.217). To quote Ariel and Fontanille (*CH*: 96): 'From Octavian's perspective, the 30 BCE reconfirmation appears to have been as important as Herod's first coronation in 40 BCE. After all, Octavian took pains to have this second event ratified by the Senate' (referring to Jos., *AJ* 15.196). From this time on, it is hardly likely that Herod would have wished to continue to draw attention to his original appointment as client king in 40 BCE, at the initiative of Antony (Jos., *BJ* 1.284–285; *AJ* 14.385–389). On the basis of an era beginning in spring 30 BCE, 'year 3', was another important milestone in both Octavian's and Herod's reigns. The year 27 BCE marked the bestowal of the title of Augustus (*Sebastos* in Greek) by the Senate on Octavian, probably on 16 January of that year,<sup>29</sup> which Herod promptly commemorated by refounding Samaria as Sebaste (Mahieu 2008: 184–185, 193; idem 2012: 132–138; Smallwood 1981: 77, n. 55; Barag 1993: 4, 16, nos. 6–7). It was probably the first of the many

*urbes Caesareae* to be established throughout the Empire.<sup>30</sup>

Herod would have had every reason to publicise this initiative and it would have been a fitting event to commemorate with a special coin issue; the fact that the distribution of finds of these coins is mostly clustered in and adjacent to the site of this town greatly strengthens the case for a connection between this coin issue and the inauguration of Sebaste.<sup>31</sup>

According to Marshak (2006: 235; 2015: 161–162), the *tau-rho* monogram is that of the mint-master responsible for producing this series of coins, whose initials were *tau* and *rho*, following prior practice in the Levant. If that were so a significant question remains, and that is, why do no other coins of Herod the Great bear comparable monograms?

Ariel (2009: 118–124) earlier supported Marshak's interpretation of the date-mark, but then retracted from that view and has accepted the 40 BCE era and a 37 BCE dating for the 'year 3' coins as the more likely chronology (*CH*: 96–97). He gives two main reasons for his change of mind. The first is chronological—the founding of Sebaste would have been more likely to have occurred in the 4<sup>th</sup> year after the reconfirmation of Herod as king, counting 30 BCE as year 1; and the second is methodological—only the original date of the king's appointment should be considered as the basis of their

era, unless it can be shown that that era is impossible. Moreover, there is no evidence from ancient textual sources or inscriptions of a 30 BCE era for Herod. Yet, at the same time, Ariel offers plausible answers to his own objections, in particular that for an era beginning 30 BCE, 'year 3' could actually fit with the founding of Sebaste.

For a second possible interpretation of the date-mark, let us return to the *tau-rho* monogram. Of the various explanations that have been offered, perhaps the one with the strongest support among scholars is *tetrarches*, on the grounds that it has an indisputable precedent in the coins of Ituraea, over a span of some 20 years down to c. 40 BCE.<sup>32</sup> The ligature is formed of the Greek letters T and P, present in the title TETPAPXHΣ. Herod himself had shared that title with his elder brother, Phasaël, in 42/41 BCE, before being appointed king by the Romans and in a position to produce his own coinage.<sup>33</sup> However, this makes little sense for Herod to advertise the title tetrarch in of Judaea, when the coin inscription names him explicitly with the more prestigious title, *basileus*.<sup>34</sup>

## Footnotes

22. Representations of Athena Nikephoros holding a winged Nike in one hand and a filleted palm branch in the other appear as types on Seleucid gold staters minted by Myrina, Cyme and Phocaea (?) for Antiochus II (261–246 BCE); see SC 1.1: nos. 498, 502 and 515, respectively. The palm branch with fillet appears as supplementary symbols on Seleucid tetradrachms of Antiochus Hierax (242–227 BCE) (SC 1.1: no. 896.1), Antiochus III (223–187 BCE) (idem: no. 1128.1), and Seleucus IV (187–175 BCE) (SC 2.1: nos. 1313.2–3 and 1313.6), and it is the main type on a hemidrachm of Tyre dated 118/7 BCE (NAC Auction 64, 17 May 2012, lot 1517; unpublished).
23. A filleted palm branch recurs as a coin type on an undated bronze issue of Cappadocia possibly struck for Archelaus Philopatris (Sydenham 1933, no. 19 = Wroth 1899: no. 9 and pl. 8.6). The authors of RPC (1.1: 552) suppose that these undated coins, with the name ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΣ, ‘belong mainly to the predecessors of Archelaus’.
24. See Radt 1986. For descriptions and iconography of the panels decorated with the Dioscuri pilos and a cock with a filleted palm branch (i.e. a victory-bearing cock), see idem: 73–75, 84–89 and Taf. 18–23.
25. SC 2.1: nos. 1849.1–3 (Alexander I Balas, 152–145 BCE; Ascalon mint), idem, no. 2122 (Antiochus VII Sidetes, 138–129 BCE; mint in the southern Levant); idem: nos. 2234.1–2 and 2236 (Alexander Zabinas, 128–123/122 BCE; Antioch mint).
26. Galinsky 1996: 314; Pollini 2012: 283. Zanker (1988: 39–41) disagrees, considering that this coin image is not to do with Actium, but represents a statue raised to commemorate Octavian’s naval victory against Sextus Pompey in 36 BCE at Naulochus, and that the coin dates from that time, although he seems to be in the minority among scholars on this issue. Gurval (1995: 5 and n. 12) takes Zanker to task for his ‘rather arbitrary and inconsistent treatment’ of Octavian’s coinage. As an example, Gurval points out that, while Zanker claims that this particular denarius commemorates Octavian’s victory at Naulochus, ‘later he dates select issues from the same series five years later, after Actium, because of the symbolic allusions to a naval victory on the coins ([Zanker 1988] 79–80)’.
27. Zanker 1988: 82–84. Aplustres feature prominently in an Augustan frieze found in the area of the Circus Flaminius, where the triumphal procession celebrating the great naval victory departed; see Galinsky 1996: 347, ill. 164. These distinctive ship’s sterns (and other parts of war galleys) are also included in the altar frieze of the Actian victory monument at Nicopolis in Epirus (Zachos 2003: 83–84 and fig. 28; Pollini 2012: 191–196 and fig. IV.27).
28. Lorber (2013: 142) acknowledges this fact and, in attempting to connect Herod with maritime success, is obliged to associate the aplustre on this coin with Herod’s flight from the Parthians and across the Mediterranean to Rome in 40 BCE (Jos. BJ 1.280; AJ 14.377), which can hardly be construed as a heroic act!
29. Eck 2007: 57. For significance of the title ‘Augustus’, see Suet., Aug. 7.; Dio. 53.16.6–8; Res Gestae 34.
30. Roller (1998: 210) suggested that Herod may have been one of the first client rulers of Rome to hail the new Augustus with a new city in his honour. On the urbes Caesareae, see Suet., Aug. 48; Eutrop. 7.10. Their common characteristics are ummarized in Jacobson 2001a: 28–30 (and references).
31. Marshak 2006: 226–230, 344–345; TJC: 59–60. Meshorer and Marshak share the opinion that this series of coins was produced at Samaria-Sebaste. Ariel and Fontanille (CH: 94–98) are not persuaded that the archaeological evidence makes the minting of the ‘year 3’ coins in Samaria-Sebaste most likely and prefer Jerusalem as their place of origin.
32. Herman 2006: 54 (Index of Monograms); see especially the identical or analogous monograms on Herman, types 5a–b (Ptolemy, son of Mennaeus, 63/62 BCE) and types 10a–c, 10h–i, 11g (Lysanias, 41/40 BCE); See idem, Catalogue, pp. 62, 65, 67. On the iconography of Ituraean coins and their political and cultural context, see Wright 2013.
33. Jos. BJ 1.244; AJ 14.326; cf. TJC, 62.
34. RPC 1.1: 678; Mahieu 2012: 368–369; CH: 90–91, 125.





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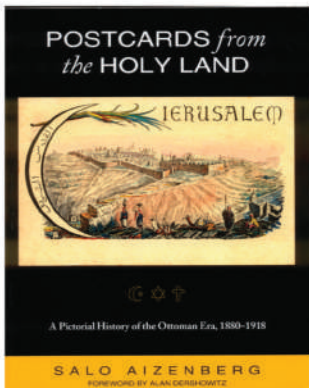
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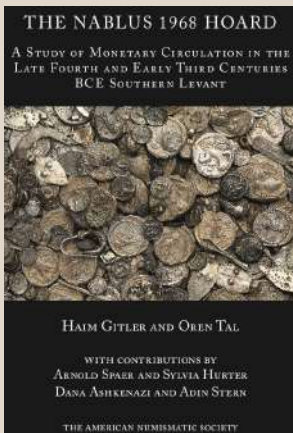
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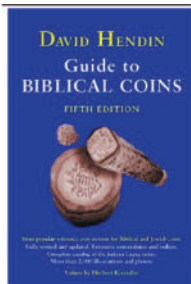
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